

most of us take for granted. I would like to point out that it is almost inevitable, if LB 835 becomes law, and telephone rates increase, and the load of the Department of Social Services increase, that there will be a major financial impact upon the State of Nebraska because there are those who say the telephone is no longer a luxury, it is a necessity. Most of us would accept it as a necessity. Most of us have had such access to it for so many years that we forget when it was not an every day convenience in our home. As a result of that we do not think of the fact that there are some people, on very limited incomes, particular, Senator Higgins, as you mentioned the elderly, the handicapped, those individuals who simply do not have the resources. I have seen those people, I have visited with them.

SPEAKER NICHOL: One minute.

SENATOR SCHMIT: I have observed and scrutinized their budgets. And the telephone in Bellwood, Nebraska at \$7.79 per month is a bargain, admittedly. Let me tell you something else...

SPEAKER NICHOL: Excuse me, sir. (Gavel.) Please hold it down, please. Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR SCHMIT: ...a substantial increase in that rate makes it unavailable to many people. But the necessity of keeping in contact with that individual is still there. And in some manner, some means, some method the State of Nebraska will step in to fill that void. I suggest that, in conclusion I suggest that the telephone industry has earned a decent rate of return over the years on their investment. I do not notice any of them going broke. I know that they have had great flexibility when it comes to providing for their investments. And I would suggest that there may, some day in the future, be a necessity to take a good look at how the investment portfolio for the telephone companies was put together and how they determine the rate of return on that investment.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Time is up, but you have five minutes of your own because you are the next speaker.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you, Mr. President. I would hope that the people in this body would pay attention to what is going on. There are more people, and probably more legislators in the Rotunda right now than there are on the floor. Maybe that's where they ought to be. If they are undecided about this bill I would wish they would get information. I have talked to many of